

One viewpoint on the political
character of Philhal

In view of the criticism sent in by ^{friends} ~~new~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the old Philhal group}, and perhaps shared by ^{Abri Zaidi} + ^{some other} friends, ~~it is necessary to consider~~ the editorial body of Philhal must seriously consider the political character of Philhal.

There is no doubt, whether we see it in terms of the editorial committee ~~with~~ (Dilep, Shukla & to a lesser extent Pandey & Sahu) or the distribution network that have for emerged, that one group having a specific political perspective today controls the initiative in bringing out Philhal. I say this not as a criticism but merely as a ^{recognition} of a deviation of the ^{status} of Philhal. And it is important to ~~recognise~~ ^{recognise} the control of Philhal ~~by~~ ^{by} the group because the political character of Philhal is & will be increasingly determined by ~~the group~~ the politics of this group.

(let us call it the new Philhal group)

This group ⁿ analyses the existing communist parties & their trade unions as non-revolutionary in the sense that they are ^(a) controlled by 'representatives' of the workers, rather than ^{the} workers themselves & (b) that these parties & unions attempt to 'manage' the ^{in carrying on the programme of capital} workers movement, rather than participate with the working class in its confrontation against capital. As a description of existing states of the working class movement ~~that~~ personally I find this accurate. Whether the present historical situation permits any other alternative is another matter which I will ~~not~~ ^{not} go into here. The point I want to make here is that this ^{new Philhal group} ~~group~~ itself is not fundamentally different

* [And I would like to mention here in passing that while this group must be applauded for the ~~Resist~~ ~~with~~ ~~at~~ humbleness with which it perceives its own rôle ~~in~~ ^{groups} the workers movement; that humility is not exclusive to it. There are others ~~also~~ among the 'representatives' also who have such humility. And certainly ~~that~~ that humility does not give the new Philhél group the excuse to adopt a 'holier & ~~more~~ ~~than~~ ~~the~~ ~~others~~ wiser than thou' attitude towards other sections of the left.

* And I am now referring to not only those directly connected with bringing out the paper but also their friends in and outside Delhi.

from the other 'left' groups which it characterises along with the Communist parties as being non-revolutionary. It is first of all largely a group of middle class intellectuals, students & professionals. It is ^{hierarchical} ~~hierarchical~~, like the other groups, in the form of ideological 'efforts', advanced cadres and less advanced cadres - the last two categories being organised into study circles. Its method of functioning is secret and underground like that of any Leninist 'party' in its embryonic phase. This group also sees its role as that of interpreting for ^{the working} ~~the~~ class ^{on} its historic role - as understood by this group. In that sense while the ^{new Philal} group is distinct from any other 'left' political groups in its political perspective proper political perspective it must be characterised along with the other groups & parties as ^{one of} ~~one~~ group ^{among the} 'representatives' of the working class, rather than as a group emerging from the working class itself.

Therefore while the group is certainly non-sectarian in its attitude towards the working class as a ~~class~~ 'class', irrespective of the affiliation of ^{different} ~~segments~~ ^{new Philal} of the class to one or another left group, the group itself cannot be seen as anything but one among the several Leninist ~~constituent~~ ^{groups & parties} of 'representatives' of the working class. * And to the extent that this group would work to carry Philal in the direction of its own perspective I think this is a sectarian departure from the original intention (~~of~~ ^{the} cyclostyled appeal) of making Philal a non-sectarian organ for all sections of the left. I would emphasise here that non-sectarianism as an attitude towards the left cannot be a merely passive attitude of 'anybody's'

to write' but an active attitude of continually working ~~the other groups to read to~~ write in Philbel, criticize & use it for their purposes as well.

Let me clarify that I personally ~~am not~~ do not ~~think~~ think that making Philbel a workers' paper as opposed to a non-sectarian organ of the left is worthwhile. For reasons Dilip has repeatedly emphasised I think that this is a very worthwhile effort. But the fact remains that this is a departure from the original intention of Philbel - as expressed in ^{my last} ~~the~~ appeal - on the basis of which we have tried to win support from other sections of the left & especially, the basis on which we approached the old Philbel group of ~~what for~~ ~~being~~ ~~taking of the name~~ using the name 'Philbel' & the good will that goes with it. ~~To carry on in this new direction~~ To ~~again~~ try to live over this departure or ~~over~~ bulldoze it through without explicitly confronting it among ourselves, and without making a clear declaration to the original Philbel ~~group~~ group & other friends among the left, would be dishonest. It would be tantamount to the same kind of secret plotting & ^{mutual} backstabbing that is so characteristic of the ^{other} left 'groups' & parties today. I think that in sincerity to its own departure from the traditional style of functioning of these groups, the new Philbel group should unambiguously announce its new perspective for Philbel, perhaps even discuss it & publish criticisms ^{of it} for a few issues in Philbel and certainly ^{must} seek clarification from the old Philbel group about whether they would still be ^{use of} willing to allow ^{the} name on this new basis. ^{sent}

This is not written for publication.
This is a note for consideration by the editorial
committee of Philal. You may or may not
choose to publish it. If you do publish, please edit
& publish anonymously. In any case I wish to
clarify that it has been hurriedly written
for the 10th meeting as I will not be there. Some
points have been overstressed or put too strongly.

Some others are tentative. Friends are requested
to see the note in the spirit in which it is written
i.e. not aggressively, with ^{the} purpose of picking
holes (any learned & careful debater can do that
with a less learned note even if the latter is right)
but sympathetically with the purpose of seeing
whether there may be a point in what I am saying.

Can we draft a short announcement of Philal
for publication in Mainstream, EPW, Frontier,
Zanussi, Curtain, Bikkhwa & other politically oriented Left papers, in 12 pg. long & explicit.
Some of them have already said they would be willing to
publish it.